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“Still Time to Plant for Summer and Fall Color”

Spring isn't the only planting season for colorful annuals and perennials. There is still time to establish those species that will flower during the summer and fall, even though some of the earlier planted standard spring annuals have begun to succumb to hot weather.

Check local garden centers and nurseries for started plants or in some cases, seeds, of these heat tolerant annuals and perennials:

Blue Daze (*Evolvulus glomerata*) is a spreading blue flowered perennial that blooms all during the warm season. **Butterfly Weed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*) provides striking clusters of orange and red flowers that attract several kinds of butterflies. **Cone Flower** *Echinacea purpurea*, has purple and white flowers all during the warm months and can be started by seed or divisions.

There are two species of **Bush Daisy** - *Gamolepis* and *Euryops*. Both reach 3 feet in height and provide profuse yellow color all summer. The common **Shrimp Plant** and **Golden Shrimp Plant** grow well under hot, wet conditions and tolerate either full sun or partial shade. **Jacobinia** comes in white, pink and yellow flowered varieties and is a good choice for a late flowering perennial in shady locations.

Hibiscus species and varieties bloom all summer and are available in many colors, including white, rose, red and pink. **Pentas** are among the most desirable and versatile color plants. They thrive during our hot, humid summers and are available in red, pink, white and lilac.

Zinnias should never be overlooked when considering plants for hot weather color. They are easy to establish from seeds or transplants and thrive during bright, hot days.

Plant selection and breeding has yielded **Coleus** varieties that are very colorful and well adapted to our summer conditions. Some have such deep red, orange and

yellow color that they look almost fluorescent.

Gaillardia, commonly known as Indian Blanket, is one of the toughest and most dependable flowers that can be grown in the landscape. It is a short, sprawling annual or perennial with yellow, orange-red blossoms. Once established in a sunny location it is extremely drought tolerant and thrives on neglect.

When plant shopping, also add these to the list of possibilities for June planting: Butterfly Bush, Ixora, Plumbago, Black-eyed Susan, Blazing Star, Blue Sage, Cardinal Flower, Cigar Plant, Fire Spike, Goldenrod, Joe-pye Weed, Lantana, Mexican Heather, Porter Weed, Tropical Sage, Wild Petunia, Coreopsis, and Sunflower.

Some of the plants mentioned previously are tropical or subtropical species, and there has been some reluctance to plant them along the northern Gulf Coast because of our winter frosts and freezes. Many of them will make it through the winter, but even if some don't - so what? They provide months of enjoyment because they are well adapted to our hot, rainy summers.

Question of the Week: My garden mums grow well but have never flowered. What am I doing wrong?

Answer: I would almost bet that there is an outdoor light source that is preventing bud set. Mums are short day plants, meaning that they set flower buds when nights are longer than days. Even a short period of light in the middle of the night can prevent flowering. Look for causes such as security motion lights, street lights or car headlights sweeping the planting from the street or driveway. Relocate your planting to an area that receives no artificial lighting.